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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [CG](#) [UG](#)
SUBJECT: NKUNDA LOYALISTS, FARDC CLASH IN NORTH KIVU BORDER TOWNS

REF: A. KAMPALA 2193
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1831

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Non-integrated troops loyal to renegade general Laurent Nkunda clashed with integrated forces of the Congolese military (FARDC) December 5 at the DRC border post of Bunagana. Elements of the non-integrated 83rd Brigade captured Bunagana and the nearby towns of Runyoni and Jomba. Integrated FARDC troops re-took Bunagana and Jomba December 6 and are awaiting reinforcements before launching a renewed offensive on Bunagana. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) MONUC military reports said elements of the non-integrated 83rd Brigade loyal to renegade general Laurent Nkunda attacked positions of the FARDC 9th Integrated Brigade (IB) at the village of Runyoni near the Ugandan border early on the morning of December 5. The renegade soldiers subsequently attacked the nearby towns of Bunagana and Jombe. Troops from the 9th IB fled their posts after a few hours of fighting. The attack prompted a wave of displaced persons which reportedly crossed the border into Uganda (ref A).

[1](#)3. (U) The FARDC's 91st Integrated Battalion launched a counter-attack in Bunagana the morning of December 6. MONUC reports said that by 0800 integrated FARDC troops had re-occupied the town and that forces from the 83rd had fled south towards Runyoni. Integrated FARDC troops also re-captured Jombe December 6.

[1](#)4. (C) Colonel Bernard Mbyamungu, who abandoned Nkunda's ranks December 4 (ref B), told MONUC military debriefers December 5 the attack on Bunagana and Runyoni was aimed at securing a re-supply route from Uganda. Mbyamungu claimed that many soldiers have left Nkunda's forces in recent weeks, and the renegade general is facing "an acute shortage" in arms, ammunition and manpower. Nkunda reportedly ordered a battalion of the 83rd Brigade from the area around Tongo (near Rutshuru) to clear a corridor for the movement of reinforcements and supplies. MONUC officials told us they do not discredit Mbyamungu's claims, but have not yet found evidence of a resupply shipment from Uganda.

[1](#)5. (C) MONUC-Goma military spokesman Major Ajay Dalal told us December 7 the areas around Bunagana remained peaceful overnight. He said the FARDC's integrated 111th Battalion, commanded by Colonel Ngumba Ramazani, is being sent to the area to reinforce the 9th IB and is expected to be in place the afternoon of December 7.

[1](#)6. (C) Dalal said MONUC officials will attempt to establish a dialogue with members of the 83rd Brigade still in Runyoni.

The goal, he said, is to convince these soldiers to lay down their weapons, abandon Nkunda's ranks, and integrate into the FARDC. The number of 83rd troops still in the town is unknown. Dalal told us if the effort is unsuccessful, the FARDC will attack the 83rd's positions once reinforcements are in place. A new offensive could be launched as early as the afternoon of December 7.

¶17. (C) Comment: These most recent events do not appear to be a part of a major offensive driven by Nkunda or his loyalists, but demonstrate he remains a threat to the province's stability. Bunagana and Runyoni are normally well outside Nkunda's zone of operations. This could well indicate his forces are looking for new sources of supply and manpower and have been weakened by recent fighting and desertions. The fighting also suggests that Nkunda can still project selective military capability beyond his base in Masisi district. End comment.
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